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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Extension Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

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TO ALL STATE DIRECTORS OF EXTENSION

Subject: Current Farm Labor News - #26

Fall Harvest Labor. The shortages of labor for the harvesting of fall crops in some areas this year appear to be more serious than at any time since the beginning of the war. The reduction in the number of foreign workers available, coupled with keen competition for cotton pickers, is making it very difficult to secure adequate labor for the harvesting of sugar beets and in some areas potatoes. Difficulty is being encountered in uncovering sources of domestic labor for such work. It is, therefore, imperative that growers, processors, and others interested in harvesting such crops exert every effort to recruit farm labor from every source possible, if crop loss is to be prevented. Extensive use of information materials, newspapers, and radio is now attracting some workers to these areas. It will be more necessary than ever before to adapt employment conditions, housing, and feeding arrangements to the desires of the particular class of labor available. Meeting fall harvest labor needs this year may well be a test of the ability to meet such needs during the postwar period.

Director Tootell Points Way. Leadership in a harvesting crisis was demonstrated by Director R. B. Tootell, of Montana's Extension Service, when he directed a letter to sugar beet growers. After outlining the problem--"about a million tons of beets (worth more than 13 million dollars) to harvest; labor is very short, you probably won't get as much labor as you need"--Director Tootell suggested these "nine things you can do better than anyone else to get results":

1. Recruit all available local and other labor possible.
2. Secure efficient work from your laborers.
3. Have experienced worker demonstrate good work methods to increase interest and output.
4. Good working and living conditions should increase the amount of work done.
5. Make full use of machines throughout the harvest season to reduce the number of men needed.
6. Ask sugar companies to receive beets whenever necessary.
7. Ask dealers to have repair parts available and distributed to make immediate delivery possible. They should also be prepared to service machines promptly.
8. Be prepared to exchange work with machine operators to insure full day and full season operation with machines.
9. Do not permit labor shortages to delay machine work.

Suggesting that "a good day's work at the start of the beet harvest, will accomplish more than several days at the tag end" he pointedly reminds the growers: "We are at the far end of the road with a tough job and the possibility of bad weather and loss of time. Last year's weather and work record will have considerable influence on a large group of workers. Housing accommodations could have been much better. Workers may put Montana last on their

schedule....Extension Service is only one of several agencies and organizations having a responsibility in the labor program. I assure you we will do our part".

Placements made thru Extension Farm Labor office during the first 7 months of 1947 total 1,675,987 which is 85.8% of the total (1,953,247) for the same period of 1946. Among men, women and youth in seasonal and year-round work, and families in year-round work, only placement of women in seasonal work showed an increase over comparable totals for the 1946 period. The placing of women in year-round work showed the smallest decrease.

During July-August, 5,102 combines passed through 14 ports of entry along Nebraska's southern line, according to a survey released by Roy Snipes, Nebraska State Farm Labor Supervisor. At 4 of the 14 stations, a record was made of the origin of these combines. It shows 2969 machines from 17 states and Canada. More than 2300 came from Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas and Canada. The others were from states as far west as California and Oregon and as far east as Ohio. More than 2,100 of the 5,102 combines were registered at the Lorenzo (panhandle) and Alma (south central) ports. Mr. Snipes reports these additional activities in the Nebraska grain harvest:

Migrant workers employed.....	6,715 (6446)
Migrant trucks employed.....	1,777 (1168)
Migrant combines employed.....	2,681 (1679)
Bushels of wheat piled on ground.....	678,750
Number of combines in state.....	15,474

Figures in the parenthesis after first three items indicate placements through Extension Farm Labor offices. Numbers of men in combine crews are included in number of workers employed or placed.

In Illinois, State Farm Labor Supervisor Murphy's "Farm Safety" section in the weekly news letter says 22 persons were injured in as many farm accidents--one fatally--and that 277 man days of work were lost, during the week ending September 12.

Virginia Extension has set tentative dates for a 7 weeks schedule of 34 showings for its labor saving show in the state this fall.

Yours very truly,

*Barnard Joy*

Barnard Joy, Acting  
Deputy Director of Extension  
Farm Labor Program

cc: State supervisor

